

April 2005

The averaging period used for the following assessment was 1961-1990.

UK overview

Rainfall levels were above average across many areas, and double the normal over parts of NE England. However, rainfall was quite varied, with parts of NE Scotland and England receiving below average. Mean temperatures above average across the whole of the UK.

Newcastle recorded 73.8 mm in the 48-hour period ending 0900 UTC on 16th. Exmouth (Devon) recorded 40.7 mm in the 24-hour period ending 1800 UTC on 23rd.

England and Wales diary of highlights

A typical April, changeable with showers or longer periods of rain interspersed with more settled periods. There was a brief colder spell on the 7th and 8th with some sleet and snow and further snow for northern hills on the 15th. Generally it was warm and notably so towards the end of the month.

1st to 3rd: Initially a ridge of high pressure affected the southern half of the UK with most parts having a dry spell. There was overnight fog and frost, with fog continuing to plague some southern and eastern coastal parts each day. There was plenty of sunshine and as a result it was warm. Later on the 3rd, as the ridge weakened, cloud increased across western parts with outbreaks of rain and drizzle reaching western fringes.

4th to 6th: A weather front pushed south-eastwards on the 4th introducing a more mobile westerly flow. That flow brought showers on the 5th, initially scattered but becoming more frequent across northern England and Wales and later the Midlands. A weather front and associated rain pushed eastwards overnight, finally clearing the east coast around mid-afternoon on the 6th. Showers developed in its wake, some heavy with hail and thunder but in the south, showers were isolated.

7th and 8th: A further weather front pushed eastwards during the 7th introducing a colder north to north-westerly flow as it cleared. This brought a return of winter with outbreaks of rain, sleet and snow pushing southwards. It was cold with Benson (Oxfordshire) falling to -5.2 °C on the night of the 8th.

9th to 12th: A transition to more settled conditions occurred during the 9th as a ridge of high pressure extended eastwards across the southern half of the UK. Southern parts remained dry with clear or sunny periods. It was also warm with Gravesend (Kent) reaching 18.6 °C on the 11th. In the north and west it was cloudier with some coastal fog. During the 12th the ridge declined allowing a weak weather front and associated patchy light rain to push south-eastwards.

13th to 16th: The main influence through this period was a low pressure centre which developed and drifted slowly eastwards. The initial low centre cleared eastwards on the 15th but a further low developed across northern England on the 16th. The lows brought unsettled weather with showers or longer periods of rain, some locally heavy and thundery. It was particularly wet across northern England with Newcastle recording 29.6 mm on the 15th and 35.4 mm on the 16th. The rain also turned to snow across the hills as far south as the Derbyshire Peaks on the night of the 15th.

17th to 19th: A weak ridge of high pressure gave most parts a fine start on the 17th and it remained fine and fairly sunny across southern and eastern parts. However, weather fronts and associated rain spread slowly across western parts during the day and across other parts overnight. The rain cleared north-eastwards during

the 18th with sunny weather following, but an arc of thundery showers pushed north-east across south Wales and southern England during the early hours of the 19th with thundery showers spreading across the rest of Wales, the Midlands and parts of East Anglia during the day. Later in the day a returning weather front brought cloud and patchy rain to the far north.

20th to 22nd: The weather front in the north pushed slowly south and east, finally fizzling out across Cornwall on the 21st. Drier sunny weather followed across most parts with temperatures warm inland. However, with an easterly wind developing it was rather cool on the east coast. Clear periods allowed local frost pockets to develop. Cloud and rain returned to the south-west later on the 22nd.

23rd to 27th: An unsettled spell for southern parts with showers and bands of rain edging slowly northwards. Exmouth (Devon) recorded 40.7 mm on the 23rd with Rothamsted (Hertfordshire) recording 25.2 mm during the night of the 24th. For northern parts this period was more settled with clear spells by night and bright or sunny periods by day. However, the rain in the south transferred north-east during the 26th. Heavy showers developed in its wake, some thundery, and a more organised band of rain swept eastwards during the night of the 27th.

28th to 30th: Lingering rain cleared most parts early on the 28th with sunny skies following, however, a trailing weather front kept the far south cloudy and damp. Sea fog kept parts of the English Channel coast dull through the 29th and 30th. Elsewhere it was generally fine, warm and sunny. However, showers developed across western parts overnight into the 30th and further heavy and thundery showers developed across central and eastern England during the night of the 30th. It was warm through this spell, with Central London recording 23.5 °C on the 30th.

Scotland diary of highlights

A mixture of wet and cyclonic, dry and sunny, and bright and showery spells of weather occurred during April.

Warm southerly winds blew across Scotland on the first three days of April. Frontal cloud covered the country on the 1st and spread from the west on the 3rd, but the 2nd was a fine day with the temperature reaching 19 °C at Tain, Kinloss and Glenlivet.

From the 4th to the 9th deep depressions moving east between Iceland and Norway brought bright, cold and showery conditions. Westerly winds veered to the north on the 7th and showers turned wintry with a maximum temperature of 2 °C at Loch Glascarnoch and a gust of 73 m.p.h. at Inverbervie.

Warm and humid air tracking around a large anticyclone to the west of Biscay covered Scotland from the 9th to the 11th. It was cloudy with some rain in the west on the 9th and 10th but the 11th was brighter with the temperature reaching 17 °C in the north-east.

Colder and showery weather returned on the 12th in association with a depression to the east of Iceland. The centre of low pressure transferred to the south-east so that by the 14th winds over Scotland had turned into the east. Rain, with snow on high ground, reached the Borders on the 15th and at Carterhouse there was 39 mm of precipitation with a maximum temperature of 4 °C. The rain spread north-west the next day and a front from the next Atlantic depression became slow moving over Scotland on the 17th and 18th. At Glasgow Bishopston 42 mm of rain fell on the 17th with 34 mm at Lochranza the next day.

From the 19th to the 25th an anticyclone in the Norwegian Sea brought light east to south-easterly winds to Scotland. There was cloud in the east at times but much of Scotland enjoyed a spell of sunny weather. On the 25th the temperature at Altnaharra ranged between -5 °C and 17 °C.

From the 26th onward depressions in the mid-Atlantic moved into the Norwegian Sea and pushed bands of rain north across Scotland. The 28th was the wettest and windiest day with 31 mm of rain at Stornoway and a

gust of 67 m.p.h. at Altnaharra. Brighter weather prevailed in the south on the 29th and in the north on the 30th.

Northern Ireland diary of highlights

Very variable weather prevailed for much of the month with rather cold and sometimes wet conditions, especially during the first half. The second half of the month was rather warmer with some good sunny spells at times.

After some rain early on the 1st, the day became brighter and warmer with some sunshine and the spring theme continued into the 2nd with temperatures rising to between 15 and 17 °C. The 3rd was rather more cloudy and cooler with some light rain. This was followed by a clearer colder night and some ground frost.

The 4th was bright but with some heavy showers and even a few isolated thunderstorms in the afternoon. The 5th was mostly cloudy with some showery rain at times.

The period between the 6th and 8th was cold and showers often fell as a wintry mix of hail, sleet and snow. A light dusting of snow affected some areas on the morning of the 8th and widespread icy surfaces gave an unwelcome reminder of winter. Temperatures on the 8th struggled between 4 and 7 °C - well below average.

Between the 9th and 16th the weather was often mixed with some occasional rain or showers but also some brighter periods with some sunshine. Some chilly nights occurred - especially the nights of the 15th and 16th when widespread grass frosts occurred.

A very wet period developed between the 16th and the 18th. Some persistent and occasionally heavy rain occurred on Sunday 17th with strong to gale force south-east winds, and this persisted into the 18th. It was miserably cold during this period with daytime temperatures struggling between 5 and 7 °C and some sleet or snow affected the highest ground. Totals of 15-25 mm of rain occurred widely and some localised flooding affected parts of County Down - where rainfall was particularly heavy and persistent. Some areas in the Mourne received nearly 80 mm of rain.

It eventually became clearer and drier late on the 18th but a cold night brought a sharp frost and temperatures down to -2 °C inland. The 19th by complete contrast was dry and mostly sunny.

The very mixed weather continued into the latter part of the month with another very wet and windy spell overnight on the 27th and 28th. This gave 10-15 mm in many areas. Before and after this wet period however, most areas had some warmer and sunny conditions.

Last updated: 27 February 2013